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C L A I M S

1. A bitumen composition comprising:-

(i) from 0.1 to 25 % wt of an elastomer,

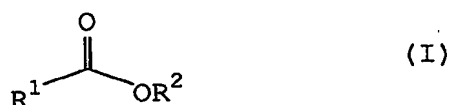
(ii) from 0.1 to 40 % wt of a solvent,

(iii) from 30 to 99 % wt of a bitumen,

5 (iv) from 0.1 to 30 % wt of a lithium salt of a C₁₀-C₄₀ fatty acid or hydroxy fatty acid, and optionally

(v) from 0 to 70 % wt of a filler, all weights based on total bitumen composition,

wherein the solvent is of general formula (I)



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wherein R¹ represents a hydrogen atom or a hydrocarbyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, R² represents a hydrocarbyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, and the sum of the carbon atoms in R¹ and R² is from 5 to 7.

15 2. A bitumen composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the elastomer is a block copolymer comprising at least two terminal poly(monovinylaromatic hydrocarbon) blocks and at least one central poly(conjugated diene) block.

3. A bitumen composition as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2,
20 where in the solvent of general formula (I) R¹ and R² each independently represent an alkyl group having from 2 to 4 carbon atoms and the sum of the carbon atoms in R¹ and R² is 6.

4. A bitumen composition as claimed in claim 3, wherein
25 the solvent of general formula (I) is n-butyl propionate.

5. A bitumen composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the bitumen has a penetration in the range

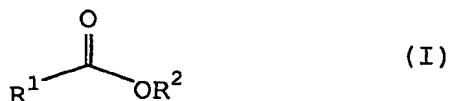
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of from 100 to 300 dmm (measured at 25 °C according to EN 1426).

6. A bitumen composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the lithium salt is a lithium salt of a C₁₂-C₂₂ fatty acid or hydroxy fatty acid.

7. Use of a bitumen composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6 as a cold-applicable adhesive.

8. A process of preparing a bitumen composition which comprises mixing a first component (A) comprising (i) from 0.1 to 25 % wt of an elastomer, and (ii) from 0.1 to 40 % wt of a solvent; with a second component (B) comprising (iii) from 30 to 99 % wt of a bitumen, (iv) from 0.1 to 30 % wt of a lithium salt of a C₁₀-C₄₀ fatty acid or hydroxy fatty acid, and optionally (v) from 0 to 70 % wt of a filler, all weights based on total bitumen composition, wherein the solvent is of general formula (I)



wherein R¹ represents a hydrogen atom or a hydrocarbyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, R² represents a hydrocarbyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, and the sum of the carbon atoms in R¹ and R² is from 5 to 7.

9. A process as claimed in claim 8, which process comprises preparing component (B) by heating the bitumen to a temperature in the range of from 200 to 300 °C, and then adding the lithium salt.

10. A process as claimed in claim 8 or claim 9, wherein the weight ratio of component (A) to component (B) is in the range of from 1:20 to 1:5.